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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****NATIONAL SURVEY SHOWS GEORGIANS WHO HUNT, FISH AND OBSERVE WILDLIFE ADD BILLIONS TO STATE ECONOMY**

SOCIAL CIRCLE, Ga. (Sept. 25, 2013) – Across the board, spending by Georgians on outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing and wildlife watching increased in the most recent comprehensive survey, providing a tremendous economic benefit of more than \$5.5 billion to the state.

The number of Georgia wildlife watchers increased by more than 400,000 since the previous survey in 2006, and reflected a huge jump in days of active participation, from two days to 30. Average hunter expenditures increased by \$1,000 per participant with the average number of days spent hunting going up 35 percent. While the number of anglers did not increase, the economic effect of what anglers spent increased by more than \$200 million.

The Georgia state report, part of the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, measures public participation in hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and other wildlife-dependent recreation, as well as how much money is spent pursuing these activities. In advance of National Hunting and Fishing Day on September 28, the report is available at www.fws.gov/southeast/georgia/economicimpact-ga.html.

Done every five years by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Census Bureau, the survey has become one of the most important sources of information on fish and wildlife recreation in the United States. Federal, state and private organizations use the rigorously-compiled and detailed information to manage wildlife and wildlife-related recreation programs, and forecast trends in participation and economic impacts.

“This is a ‘must read’ for anyone who hunts, fishes or watches wildlife, as well as news reporters, economists and elected officials,” said Cindy Dohner, Southeast regional director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. “It is filled with valuable facts that show the economic impact of hunting and fishing and wildlife viewing.”

Nationally, here are some highlights:

- More than 90 million U.S. residents 16 years old and older participated in some form of wildlife-related recreation in 2011, up 3 percent from five years earlier. The increase was primarily among those who fished and hunted.
- Wildlife recreationists spent \$144.7 billion in 2011 on their activities, which equated to 1 percent of the gross domestic product. Of the total amount spent, \$49.5 billion was trip-related, \$70.4 billion was spent on equipment and \$25.1 billion was spent on other items such as licenses and land leasing and ownership.
- The number of people who hunted or fished or both rose from 33.9 million in 2006 to 37.4 million in 2011.

- 71.8 million U.S. residents observed or photographed wildlife in 2011. Almost 68.6 million people wildlife watched around their homes, and 22.5 million people took trips of at least one mile from home to primarily wildlife watch.
- Of the 46.7 million people who observed wild birds, 88 percent did so around their homes and 38 percent on trips a mile or more from home.
- People spent \$54.9 billion on their wildlife-watching trips, equipment, and other items in 2011. This amounted to \$981 on average per person for the year.

Statewide, here are some results:

- More than 3.6 million Georgians 16 years old and older participated in some form of wildlife-related recreation in 2011. The increase was primarily among those who wildlife-watched.
- Wildlife recreationists spent \$3.6 billion in 2011 on their activities in the state.
- The Georgia data show that 829,000 people fished, 392,000 hunted and 2.3 million participated in at least one type of wildlife-watching activity such as observing or photographing wildlife or bird feeding.
- Over 2 million people wildlife watched around their homes, and 1.1 million people took trips of at least one mile from home to primarily wildlife watch.
- People in Georgia spent \$1.8 billion on their wildlife-watching trips, equipment, and other items in 2011. This amounted to \$639 on average per person for the year.

Complete survey results are available at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/NatSurveyIndex.htm>

Those who support wildlife-related recreation, whether it is through hunting, fishing or wildlife watching, deserve a round of applause for helping support these activities and ensuring that they continue to be available to everyone.

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